



Master's Prospectus

(MA 6900 Prospectus Course, 3 credits)

Guidelines for the prospectus

The prospectus is a plan of action, or description, that is required of graduate students before you are allowed to begin writing your thesis. A prospectus should help you fine-tune your plans as you research and flesh out ideas for your thesis. It also provides a framework to help keep you on track as you research and write. Additionally, it lets faculty know your intentions enabling them to help with suggestions for research, additional sources to check, and ideas for you to consider.

Before writing the prospectus, you must spend the time necessary to do in-depth research to ensure that this will be an original project that adds to existing discourse surrounding your topic. This research will give you the background you need to understand what is already part of the larger discussion and how your thesis can be a positive addition. It will also help you to complete the bibliography and research plan necessary for the prospectus.

The master's thesis should not be a compilation of your own opinions. The intention of a thesis is for you to engage in the great conversation concerning the idea you are interested in. Look at all sides of the issue, see what is already part of the discussion, notice its history and how that history has shaped the conversation, and then see what you can add to it.

There is no mandatory page requirement for the prospectus; rather, it needs to cover the required parts in such a way to help you and the faculty committee have a firm grasp of the ideas you wish to pursue.

Sections required for the prospectus

- Thesis statement; additional description if necessary.
- Purpose; this answers such questions as why you think this is important, what you will add to the conversation, and why it needs to be done.
- Abstract; a summary of what you intend your thesis to convey.
- Outline, the thesis broken up by sections or chapters and what those will each include
- Bibliography; a list of what sources will be used. This is considered a working bibliography and updates in the final version are fine, but it should be as extensive as possible.
- Research Plan; how you intend to complete your thesis.

Once you have completed the prospectus, submit it to the faculty member whom you wish to be your thesis advisor. If they choose to accept that responsibility, they will need to sign off on the it before you begin work on the actual thesis.

You should have the approval you need for your prospectus about the same time that you take your degree coursework orals. After prospectus approval and orals, writing your thesis and then its defense will be all that is left of your master's program.

Master's Thesis

(MA 6950 Thesis Course, 3 credits)

Once the prospectus has been completed and signed off by your thesis advisor, you are free to enroll in the Thesis Course and begin the actual work of your thesis. If you don't complete the writing during the first semester, you are welcome to enroll again. You must be enrolled with at least _____ credits to be considered actively working on your thesis and to remain enrolled in the program.

Sections required for the thesis

- Title page. (example follows)
- Signature page: your name at the top with degree underneath and a place for signatures below.
- Table of Contents.
- Abstract: a summary of what you intend to cover including your conclusions. This should be similar to the prospectus abstract but may have been slightly amended during any additional research process.
- Introduction: This includes such ideas as why this topic is important, how it has been studied in the past, and why it should be studied. Also include a literature review. (This may be a separate section if that works better.) This is where you discuss previous research that has been done on the subject and how others have dealt with it throughout history and today. This should include all sides of the issue that have been part of the discussion. Make sure to cover the classics and original thinking as well as what is occurring today.
- Main body of the thesis: this includes your claim(s) about the topic and its defense. This should be a persuasive paper as you try and show why your ideas are a necessary part of the greater conversation.
- Bibliography; a list of sources used for the thesis.

(An example of how your thesis should be structured.)

Thesis Title

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Master of Arts in Classical Liberal Arts
Mount Liberty College

Your Name
Month and Year

Your Name
Master of Arts, Classical Liberal Arts

Professor's name, Committee Chair

date

Professor's name, Committee

date

Professor's name, Committee

date

Table of Contents

Abstract.	
Introduction.	
Thesis	
Sections or chapters	
Sections or chapters	
Sections or chapters	
Summary	
Endnotes.	
Bibliography.	